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Thursday, December 07, 2017

WEATHER, p. 2

THU: 46°F | 30°F
Sunny

FRI: 42°F | 31°F
Partly sunny

SAT: 40°F | 29°F
Chance of snow or rain

Joint bill will likely omit tuition taxes

Endowment tax expected to stay

By Whitney Zhang
ASSOCIATE NEWS EDITOR

The Graduate Student Council's meeting yesterday evening began with a Q&A on the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act with MIT Washington D.C. Director David Goldston, Chancellor Cynthia Barnhart PhD '88, Vice Chancellor Ian Waitz, and Vice President and General Counsel Mark DiVincenzo. All members of the forum agreed that the post-reconciliation bill would most likely not include the portion of the bill taxing graduate student tuition waivers.

Goldston said that generally there was "reason for optimism about the graduate student tax" because it is only present in the House, not Senate, version of the bill.

In an email to *The Tech,* MIT political science professor Charles Stewart concurred that this section is "obviously mean-spirited, and the fact that the Senate took it out means that they will now look mean if they agree to putting it back in."

However, "the tax on big university endowment returns is in both bills, so that's pretty much guaranteed to stay," Stewart added. The forum members also echoed these concerns during the meeting.

Goldston also applauded graduate students' "enormously helpful and important efforts" against the bill. In an email to *The Tech*, GSC President Sarah Goodman stated that the GSC sent a team of four graduate students to D.C. to meet with senators and representatives last week and is continuously monitoring the bill. Students speaking out against the bill have also been profiled in NPRand Time and written op-eds in The New

Tax Bill, Page 10

MAHI SHAFIULLAH —THE TECH

Shirley Ann Jackson, the first African-American female MIT student to earn a PhD, addresses the audience at the memorial service held in honor of Paul E. Gray, MIT's 14th president, in a ceremony Thursday Nov. 30.

Student org. funding under review

Career Fair profits to be redirected to general institute budget

By Amy Shim
STAFF REPORTER

The Student Organization Review Group, a committee of students and administrators commissioned by Chancellor Cynthia Barnhart PhD '88, is discussing ways to restructure the budgeting and funding process of student groups.

"Student groups are funded through multiple revenue sources. If you think about those as buckets — so you have the General Institute Budget, and you have career fair revenue, and you have the Student Life Fee, gifts from alumni, ticket sales — groups will be petitioning for a new fund, which is a new bucket, into which the GIB, career fair funds, and the Student Life Fee flow," Suzy Nelson, vice president and dean for student life, said in an interview with *The Tech.*

The General Institute Budget (GIB) is a base fund of authorized MIT funding, and the Student Life Fee (SLF) is a $312 mandatory charge to all students that is dedicated towards the improvement of student life.

"It's better to have a more straightforward funding model with more clarity on the way funding is distributed with regards to the funding sources," GSC Treasurer Krithika Ramchander told *The Tech*.

The discussion for restructuring originated from complaints about the annual Fall Career Fair and a desire to provide stabler sources of revenue for groups that currently benefit from profits made from Career Fair, which are the Graduate Student Council, the senior class council, and Society of Women Engineers.

In past surveys by MIT Global Education and Career Development (GECD), the Fall Career Fair has frequently been criticized for catering to companies that can afford to pay more money for a chance to recruit MIT student instead of representing a breadth of professional organizations.

"Career fairs, in general, shouldn't be used to fund student groups because it really is the wrong incentive structure. It incentivizes those companies that can pay a lot to come to a career fair to come, and those that might not be able to pay a lot of money not to come," Nelson said. "We're aiming for a kind of decoupling of the Career Fair proceeds from the funding of groups."

Members from the GSC, the UA, Senior Class, SWE, as well as Nelson, DSL Executive Director of Administration Peter Cummings, and Senior Associate Dean for Diversity and Community Involvement Gustavo Burckett currently sit on the committee and are working on creating a set of guidelines and best-practice processes for student groups to follow in order to create a rigorous, transparent way of distributing MIT funds.

"We want to have a rational,

Funding, Page 3

SwipeShare to allow guest swipe transfer

CASE survey results inspired program

By Fiona Chen
STAFF REPORTER

The Undergraduate Association and Division of Student Life recently launched a program called SwipeShare, aimed at alleviating food insecurity issues at MIT. The program allows students who are on meal plans to donate their guest swipes for usage by students who are facing food insecurity problems.

Food insecurity, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, is defined by a lack of consistent access to enough food for an active, healthy life.

This new program was prompted by a combination of anecdotal reports and a recent study conducted by the student group Class Awareness, Support, and Equality (CASE). The CASE study found that 11.6% of respondents have been unable to afford food at some point.

Students who wish to donate guest swipes can visit the website studentlife.mit.edu/swipeshare. After logging in with certificates, they can view the number of guest swipes they have remaining for the semester and select how many of those guest swipes they would like to donate.

The swipes are available for usage by both undergraduate and graduate students — undergraduate students who wish to receive guest swipes should talk to a dean in the Student Support Services Office; graduate students should contact Naomi Carton at naomic@mit.edu.

These services are provided discretely and flexibly. DSL Senior Associate Dean David Randall said in an interview with *The Tech*, "We want the bar to be low … so there's not a lot of paperwork. We're not looking for an application. We want you to come in and tell us what your need is, and we can figure out a way to help." DSL Direction of Communications Matthew Bauer added in an interview with *The Tech*, "A request for help will not go through a complex process. Rather, it's a conversation between two people. We want students to feel comfortable approaching DSL staff for help, and to know that their request will be handled with discretion and care."

Furthermore, students don't need to be of a certain socioeconomic background or receiving a certain amount of financial aid to qualify for

SwipeShare, Page 14

Facebook COO to be 2018 speaker

Facebook's Chief Operating Officer, Sheryl Sandberg will be MIT's commencement speaker June 8, 2018.

As COO, Sandberg oversees Facebook's business operations. Before her role at Facebook, Sandberg was vice president of global online sales and operations at Google, and before that, she was chief of staff the United States Treasury Department under President Clinton.

Sandberg holds two degrees from Harvard University, a BA in economics (1991) and an MBA (1995).

Graduate Student Council President Sarah Ann Goodman told MIT News that she is "thrilled that Sheryl Sandberg was selected as the Commencement speaker. The MIT community will benefit immensely from the insights of this trailblazing and resilient woman in the tech industry."

Previous MIT commencement speakers include Apple CEO Tim Cook (2017); actor and filmmaker Matt Damon (2016); U.S. Chief Technology Officer Megan Smith '86 SM '88 (2015); DuPont CEO Ellen Kullman (2014); and Dropbox co-founder and CEO Drew Houston '05 (2013).

— Karleigh Moore

PHOTO COURTESY OF FACEBOOK

Sheryl Sandberg, COO of Facebook, to be 2018 Commencement Speaker

IN SHORT

Subject evaluations areopen now until Monday, Dec. 18.

Application for winter funding from Finboard is due Friday, Dec. 8, 11:59 p.m.

Apply to be a part of the Graduate Housing Implementation Team by Friday, Dec. 8.

Participatory budgeting for the City of Cambridge isopen until midnight Friday, Dec. 8. Vote online: http://pb.cambridgema.gov/.

Preregistration for spring and IAP classes is open.

This is our **last issue of the semester**. *The Tech* will return to a bench near you Jan 11.

Send news and tips to *news@tech.mit.edu.*

EDITORIAL: THE TAX BILL
We dissect how the bill, if signed into law, will be detrimental to MIT. **OPINION, p. 4**

ADJUSTING TO FREE TIME
Ever find yourself missing the firehose over winter break? **CAMPUS LIFE, p. 5**

EXERISE YOUR VOTE
Tell Cambridge how to spend its budget. **NEWS, p. 13**

TRASHION SHOW
Recycled haut couture, made by students for students, graces the catwalk. **ARTS, p. 9**

REFORMING CAREER FAIR
Read our feature on MIT's biggest job fest and how student concerns led to a push for change. **NEWS, p. 2**

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Fall Career Fair organizers look to increase company diversity, major representation

'Freshmen don't know what they want to major in, what's represented there gives them an idea about the jobs available.'

By Sharon Chao
ASSOCIATE NEWS EDITOR

MIT students and organizations are looking at making changes to Fall Career Fair, an annual student-organized campus recruiting event, including increasing diversity of companies at the fair, as well as changing the career fair revenue structure. In this feature, we look at the history of the career fair and the long-standing concerns that has led to the current push for reform.

> **"A student group who wants to hold a career fair in the fall can reach out to the GECD and CF Committee. We will let it happen"**

Background

One condition of the agreement governing the Fall Career Fair is that there can be no other student-run career fairs in the fall. In 1999, the administration asked the Graduate Student Council, Society of Women Engineers, and Senior Class Council — which previously held separate career fairs — to merge their fairs. "Back then, it was probably challenging with so many fairs happening all at the same time. Some companies didn't want to send their representatives here multiple times, so the fairs were competing with each other for the same employer. Students also didn't know which fair to go to. It was a logistical nightmare," GECD CF advisor Tamara Menghi said.

However, CF Facilitator Isaiah Borne '18 clarified a caveat that has not been publicized nor can be found anywhere in writing. "A student group who wants to hold a career fair in the fall can reach out to the GECD and CF Committee. We will let it happen," Borne said. "We are fine with anything outside the range of Career Fair Week."

Though the administration ultimately has the power to make decisions, the Fall CF is managed by 12 CF Directors, who are selected by the three partner organizations and the previous year's CF Directors. Two GECD CF advisors also assist the directors.

The revenue, which typically approaches a million dollars, is distributed among these three organizations. SWE Financial Officer Rebecca Grekin '19 declined to give its specific percentage. GSC received 42 percent of the revenue in 2017. The Senior Class Council could not be reached for comment.

The career fair is overseen by the Graduate Student Council, Society of Women Engineers, and Senior Class Council. It is governed by an agreement signed every three years by the Dean for Undergraduate Education, Vice President of Student Life, Chancellor for Academic Advancement, Executive Director of Global Education and Career Development, and Dean for Graduate Education, according to the UA Innovation Committee's Report and Assessment of the 2016 Fall Career Fair.

Concerns

Students have long expressed concerns about the dominance of Course 6 opportunities, dating back to a 2013 article in The Tech. Zareen Choudhury '18 told *The Tech*, "For non-Course 6 majors, Fall CF can be a very disheartening experience because they don't see the things that they like. If there are things that they like, it'll be extremely crowded because everyone in their major is there."

The lack of diversity extends beyond job opportunities to choice of major. "A lot of people get their first impressions about career options from the Fall CF," Amelie Kharey '18 told *The Tech*. "If freshmen don't know what they want to major in, what's represented there gives them an idea about the jobs available."

In March 2016, a group of students that included some UA committee chairs discussed starting an alternative career fair that focused on social good and non-Course 6 opportunities, according to the UA Innovation Committee's Report and Assessment of the 2016 Fall CF.

In April 2016, then UA President Matthew Davis '16 charged the UA Innovation Committee to observe and suggest recommendations about the planning of the 2016 Fall CF.

In June 2017, then UA President Sophia Liu '17 wrote an op-ed in The Tech criticizing Fall CF's revenue structure. Because the three partner organizations get most or all of their budget from the fair revenue, "monetary incentives skew CF towards Course 6," Liu wrote. Liu quoted a 2016 CF director who said, "The issue is we could get more non-Course 6 companies, but we would have to lower the price [for company admission to the fair], and the student groups who get a ton of money don't want that."

Liu recommended that the revenue go into the General Institute Budget, a source distributed by MIT, instead of only the GSC, SWE, and Senior Class Council. This would allow all members of the MIT community to benefit. "In an event that profits off of MIT students in such a prohibitive way (no other [student-run] career fairs are allowed [in the fall]), the revenue must go back to serve those whom were underserved," Liu wrote.

Diversity: Recent Initiatives

In recent years, the administration, the three partner organizations, and the Fall CF directors have increased efforts to recruit companies from underrepresented majors. In the summer of 2016, the GSC e-mailed a survey to all graduate students, which was later forwarded to undergraduate students, asking which companies students wanted to see at the fair, according to GSC Secretary Orpheus Chatzivasileiou G. MIT Institutional Research and the GECD also e-mailed out a Career Exploration Survey over IAP 2017.

Based on the results of the GECD survey, the CF directors identified the underrepresented majors, which included Courses 1, 3, 4, 5, 7, 9, 11, 20, 21, and 22. In July 2017, Fall CF Director of Employer Relations Drew Weibel G collaborated with the GECD to compile a list of 450 companies that students had specified in the survey that they were interested in seeing.

Weibel recruited 25 student volunteers to call and e-mail each of those companies. According to Weibel, they were able to get in contact with about 85 percent of the companies that students were interested in. "Our plan for the future is to do it earlier in the year, like in February or March instead of July," Weibel said.

The Fall CF also offered discounted prices for startups, nonprofits, and special interest companies. According to the 2017 Fall CF website, the Copper sponsorship tier cost $1,250, which was for a regular booth location. In comparison, the Start-up/Non-profit tier price was $500 (with the option to request reimbursement for accommodation and travel expenses up to $500) for a designated location with increased student traffic.

Meanwhile, special interest companies had to be primarily hiring from specific majors. They were given priority booth location within their tier, higher priority to host information sessions or coffee chats, and other benefits.

Diversity: Comparison to the GECD Spring CF

The Fall CF is open to any company who wants to attend. "There has never been an issue where we had turn away companies," Weibel said. "We had about 400 companies attend this year, and we have room for 450."

In contrast, the GECD-organized Spring CF carefully selects which companies get to attend. The Spring CF Committee, composed of GECD representatives, examines each company for a variety of factors, including what student years and courses they are looking to recruit, according to the GECD Assistant Director of Employer Relations Mike Ahern, who co-leads the Spring CF Committee.

"We don't accept everyone that gets back to us in that mass email," Ahern said. "We divvy the companies up so there's even or at least good representation of each. The main focus for Course 6 is not to have too many."

Chatzivasileiou viewed the selection process differently. "The idea of Fall CF is to have as many options as possible. We are always reaching to new companies, and we haven't made the decision to exclude anyone," Chatzivasileiou said.

Diversity: Future Initiatives

Though the Fall CF directors have been more active in recruiting companies from underrepresented majors, students still feel that the fair is too Course 6-heavy. "Some companies who seemed like they wanted Course 20 only wanted Course 6," Max Freitas '19 said. "At the 2016 Fall CF, one biotech company that I talked to ended up only wanting a Course 6 student to program. I don't really see many changes in the fair from year to year."

Chatzivasileiou acknowledged that work still has to be done. "We have to educate companies about what skills students have outside their major. For example, a very large percentage of students can do basic coding. Companies should hire for skillsets as opposed to specific majors," Chatzivasileiou said.

This year, Course 20 faculty invited 20 to 30 freshmen to its Course 20 Career Expo for the first time, according to an email written by Professor Linda Griffith. "Even a small pilot, with 20-30 carefully-selected freshmen, could potentially create "buzz" about Course 20, as the freshmen will talk to their friends, dorm mates, etc. This could potentially have an impact on selection of majors," Griffith wrote.

Career Fair Funding

According to the 2017 Fall CF website, the Platinum tier, the highest sponsorship level which included a full-page ad in the fair booklet and a custom booth location, costed $18,000. All 4 of this fall's Platinum sponsors were software and Course 6-geared companies: Ab Initio Software, MOTU, Rev, and Oracle. That was followed by the Gold, Silver, and Bronze tiers, priced at $9,000, $6,000, and $3,000 respectively. More than 75 percent of the Gold sponsorship companies were software or trading companies seeking largely Course 6 students and skills. The Copper sponsorship, which only covered an available booth, was $1,250.

> **Liu recommended that the revenue go into the General Institute Budget, a source distributed by MIT, instead of only the GSC, SWE, and Senior Class Council.**

In comparison, the 2017 Spring CF costed $600 per booth. They also offered additional discounts for nonprofits and start-ups.

Some students dislike the benefits that the higher level sponsorship tiers receive. Kharey said, "Companies should not be allowed to have giant displays. It's not fair to give them so much room to advertise. It's one of the factors that leads people to think that CS is where all the money and opportunities are."

In October, Vice President and Dean for Student Life Suzy Nelson began meeting with GSC, SWE, and the Senior Class Council representatives to discuss decoupling the Fall CF revenue from the organizations' budgets. "The idea is that the revenue would instead go into a big pot that all student groups will get their money from," Grekin, SWE Financial Officer, said.

One of the reasons for decoupling is to make the funding of the three partner organizations independent of the Fall CF revenue, which varies each year. "The revenue depends on how many companies attend, and it's hard to innovate to improve representation of majors if student organization budgets are concerned," UA President Sarah Melvin '18 said.

The decoupling would allow the CF directors to lower the sponsorship tier prices. "As of now, the more money you pay gets you a better booth location. But with the decoupling, all companies can pay the same amount of money and we can put them wherever we want," CF Career Hack Director and UA Secretary Kathryn Jiang '20 said. "We can highlight smaller companies that historically haven't gotten as much traffic."

A consequence of decoupling is that SWE would get have a smaller budget, according to Grekin. However, the GSC's budget would remain the same. In 2017, it got 42 percent of the Fall CF revenue, and this comprised 67 percent of its total budget.

Career Development at MIT

This year, the Fall CF directors added more programs to help students explore career options. There was a passport event to encourage students to talk to companies in different industries, as well as "Me in the Future" events co-organized with several MIT offices to provide tips for career exploration and networking. Freshmen and volunteers were also permitted early access to the fair.

However, "there is a perception of the Fall CF being the only way to find a job. That's not true. The question is, how do we better communicate to students what the other opportunities are?" Chatzivasileiou said.

The GECD has been "focusing on informing students about careers that they might not realize could be a good fit," Menghi said. Infinite Careers is one such collaboration between GECD and the MIT Alumni Association that is about "alumni who left the Institute with one path and ended up down another with very unique and unexpected careers that students may not necessarily think about."

Furthermore, Vice Chancellor Ian Waitz is currently in the process of creating a Career Development Working Group. "My objective is to look broadly at the services we provide to allow students to explore different careers, and identify different job and internship opportunities," Waitz said. He aims to identify the participants in December and launch the working group in January.

Efforts to expand career development at MIT are ongoing, and the Fall CF is only a part of it. According to the 2016 GECD Graduating Student Survey Report, 33.8% of undergraduates and 4.5% of masters students found their jobs through Career Fair. Other ways students found jobs were by networking, internships leading to job offers, and directly applying to the employer.

"Think about Fall CF as the start to your career search journey," Weibel said. "Not getting a job at the fair doesn't meant that you won't be able to find a job. It should only be a learning experience that encourages students to look into what they want to do."

Sophomore self-funds popular class-picking guide Firehose

Firehose, a class-picking guide for MIT students, has been updated to reflect the schedule and available classes for the Spring 2018 semester.

Flyers around campus advertising Firehose call it "just like course picker but better."

This iteration of Firehose with scheduling features was created and launched in April 2017 by Edward Fan '20. Fan independently develops and maintains the site.

"Picking the right classes is an incredibly important decision for any student," Fan wrote in an email to *The Tech*. "Choosing well-taught and interesting electives and HASS classes is difficult, and Firehose helps significantly with that problem."

Firehose is currently completely self-funded, and the MIT administration does not pay for or endorse Firehose. Fan explained that apart from a "small ProjX grant," he has paid for all costs related to Firehose. MIT ProjX is branch of the student-run organization TechX that provides funding for MIT student projects every semester.

Firehose has been well-received among the MIT student community. Fan reports that during the two-week span of Aug. 27 to Sept. 9, 6,545 unique devices visited Firehose for a total of 22,140 page hits. On the first day of class registration (Sept. 5) alone, Firehose was accessed 3,624 times.

"Firehose made my transition into MIT much easier by simplifying the course selection process," Varsha Sridhar '21 said in an interview with *The Tech*. "The ability to plan out my schedule as I wanted helped with my time management this semester."

When asked about the future of Firehose, Fan wrote, "I'm committed to doing anything that will help students get the most out of their time at MIT. Expanding and making Firehose better are steps that could help students, and they're on my radar."

— Sandhya Kalavacherla

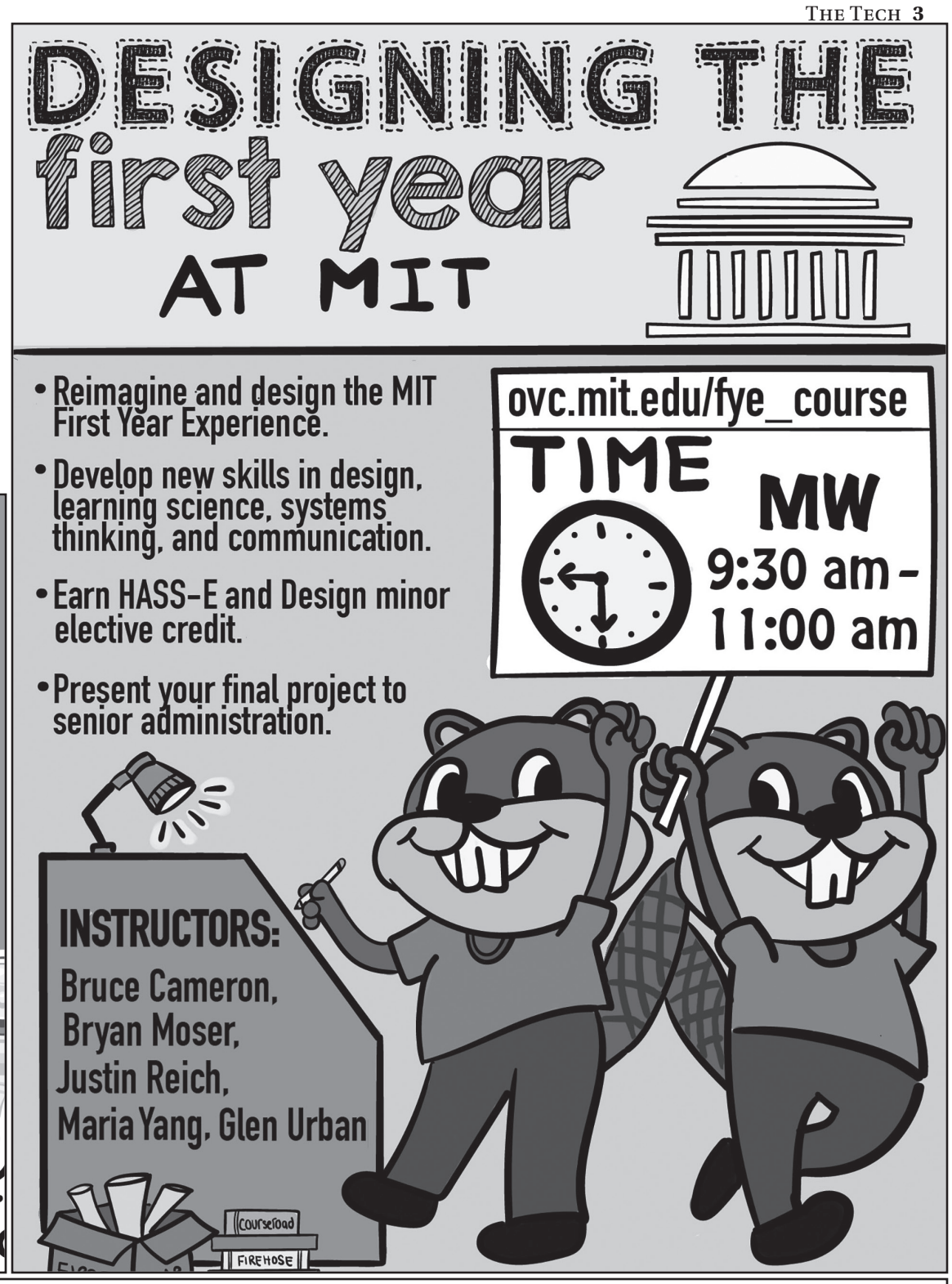
Review group aims to revise funding by FY19

Funding, from Page 1

transparent way of looking at the way money is spent," said Orpheus Chatzivasileiou, the GSC secretary in an interview with *The Tech* Sunday. "Our budget is on our website, and is available to pretty much anyone, and we feel that it is good practice for everyone do that." In May, a UA vote to make class council budgets public did not pass, with 12 of 34 votes in favor and one abstaining. Undergraduates must meet in person with a member of their class council to see the budget.

"Is it the right way to keep spending money without having a group of people actually think about how the money is spent? Maybe there are different ways to do that, that we as an institution haven't really thought about before," said Cummings.

The committee aims for the changes to be implemented in fiscal year 2019.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OPINION OPINION OPINION

CAMPUS LIFE CAMPUS LIFE CAMPUS LIFE

MIT iGEM team uses new CRISPR protein to target cancer-causing RNA splicing errors

Students' novel construct could be a therapeutic for small cell lung cancer

By Maxwell Benjamin Nagarajan

"This is the most authentic research experience you can get before grad school," said Dr. Brian Teague, a research scientist in Professor Ron Weiss's lab, about competing in the international genetic engineered machine (iGEM) competition.

Started by MIT as an IAP course in 2003, iGEM has grown into a large international competition of more than 300 schools around the world. iGEM teams use synthetic biology to solve real-world problems, and the competition culminates at the iGEM Jamboree, an event held in the fall with presentations, poster sessions, and opportunities for teams to interact with each other. In one well-known iGEM project from 2004 for example, students from the University of Texas engineered a bacterial system able to take a chemical photograph.

The 12-person MIT team project for 2017 was based on controlling alternative splicing. Genes consist of exons (coding DNA sequences) and introns (non-coding DNA sequences). When messenger RNA (mRNA) is initially transcribed from DNA, it contains both exons and introns. Before the mRNA transcript can be translated into a protein, the introns need to be removed in a process called RNA splicing. Alternative splicing occurs when some exons are not included in the processed mRNA transcript.

To illustrate this concept, the team compared a transcript to an English sentence. A spliced mRNA transcript with all exons included could be "The grass is always greener on the other side," whereas an alternatively spliced transcript could be "The grass is on the other side," changing the meaning of the sentence completely.

Mistakes in alternative splicing can lead to several diseases, including myotonic dystrophy, spinal muscular atrophy, retinitis pigmentosa, and forms of cancer. "Our main avenue for pursuing [control of alternative splicing] was to use a fairly new CRISPR protein: Cas13a," said Molly Stephens '18.

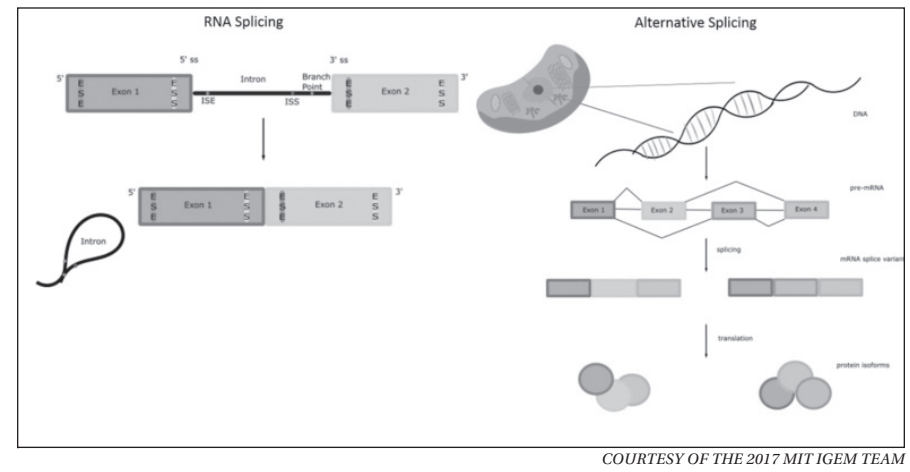
Like other CRISPR proteins, Cas13a can be guided to bind to and cut a specific nucleic acid sequence with a complementary RNA sequence. However, instead of targeting DNA like most CRISPR proteins, which would be a risky change to the genome, Cas13a binds to and cuts RNA. The team built a construct that has the potential to guide a mutated form of Cas13a to a particular mRNA sequence to prevent incorrect RNA splicing. Further testing is necessary, but if successful, this construct could be used therapeutically in small cell lung cancer, the team's disease model.

It wasn't all lab work. Nia Myrie '20 said, "It's a research experience, but I cannot even explain how much I've learned outside of the realm of science." As part of the "human practices" component of their iGEM project, the team met with experts in synthetic biology from MIT and at miRagen Therapeutics. They also presented in an outreach event at the MIT Museum, engaged with high school students, and helped high school teachers design a synthetic biology curriculum.

For the MIT team, one of the valuable opportunities at the iGEM Jamboree was to interact with other teams from around the world. Adil Yusuf '18 said that one of his favorite projects was done by the team from the College of William and Mary. They had an innovative synthetic biology project, but what stood out to him was their approach to the human practices component of their project. Yusuf said that William and Mary's team "assessed the outcomes of previous human practices projects and built a database for past and future projects." This database will help future teams learn from the experiences of past ones when designing their projects.

One aspect of iGEM that stood out to the team was that their hard work does lead to real value for the research community. Stephens said, "One of the most important moments was when we were contacted by someone in the Weiss lab who was interested in what we had produced as an undergrad team."

MIT teams typically start working over IAP, brainstorming ideas for projects. Students learn more about synthetic biology techniques in the spring semester, and do most of the experimental work of their project over the summer. They spend the fall semester preparing for the iGEM Jamboree. All of the information needed to apply for MIT's 2018 iGEM team is available at igem.mit.edu. The application deadline is Dec. 15.



COURTESY OF THE 2017 MIT IGEM TEAM

Left, during RNA splicing, introns are removed. Right, in alternative splicing, some exons can be removed. In the image, one spliced transcript has exons 1, 2, and 4, and the other has exons 1, 3, and 4.

DID YOUR MIT ESSAYS GET YOU IN?

The Tech is collecting successful application essays (hint: yours!).
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Say Hello

To My Little Friend.

photo@tech.mit.edu

MOVIE REVIEW

From disaster to laughter

‘The Disaster Artist’ transforms ‘the worst film you will ever see ever in your entire life’ into a humorous uproar

By Lila Jansen

In 2003, *The Room*, written by, directed by, produced by, and starring Tommy Wiseau was released and grew to popular acclaim as “ the worst film that you will ever see ever in your entire life.” Fascinating enough as it is to its cult-like following for being so outrageously terrible, it is even more fascinating for the story behind its creation. An exploration of that story comes in the form of *The Disaster Artist*, directed by and starring James Franco, a film about the making of the worst film ever created.

The Disaster Artist is everything that you would expect from a Franco film: uproariously funny, with Seth Rogen (of course) and star-studded cameos throughout. If you are expecting a film showing off Franco’s outstanding looks, however, look elsewhere. Francois suited up in a full prosthetic face throughout the film, making him almost indistinguishable from (although still undoubtedly more attractive than) the real Wiseau that fans will remember from *The Room*. Even without the makeup, however, Franco plays the role as though it was made for him, capturing the accent, mannerisms, and idiosyncrasies of the character superbly. As co-actor Paul Scheer and writer Michael Weber describe, “Franco was fully Wiseau from the first reading.”

But the movie is not just about capturing the making of *The Room* or even of trying to answer the questions surrounding the enigmatic Tommy Wiseau and his unknown origins, age, and monetary sources that allowed him to spend $6 million to produce a film that only net $1,800 in its opening weekend. Instead, the movie attempts to capture the relationship between Tommy and his young friend and co-star in *The Room*, Greg Sestero, played by Dave Franco, and to try to understand what kept Greg committed to the movie and his friendship with Wiseau throughout its production.

★★★★☆

The Disaster Artist

Directed by James Franco

Written by Scott Neustadter and Michael H. Weber

Starring James Franco, Dave Franco, Seth Roger

What makes the movie so superb, perhaps, is that it is based on a fully documented event. Wiseau, in his beliefs that he was creating an act of cinematography of the highest quality, actually hired a documentarian to film the production of the film. This data, along with the fact that Franco and his cast and crew had to reproduce almost 40 percent of *The Room* in order to film *The Disaster Artist*, gives the film a truly insightful behind-the-scenes perspective on the real events it portrays.

In a seemingly impossible act, *The Disaster Artist* not only overcame its clichéd “movie about making a movie” plot but also managed to transform “the worst film that you will ever see ever in your entire life” into an utterly hysterical movie and a surprisingly perceptive and sharp-witted look into the relationships and emotions that tie people to their visions, ambitions and ultimately, to one another.

MOVIE NEWS

The other side of hope

Kaurismäki’s film makes a powerful statement about the Syrian refugee crisis as it follows the lives of two men attempting to escape their troubled pasts

The Other Side of Hope

Directed by Aki Kaurismäki

Starring Sherwan Haji, Sakari Kuosmanen

Now Playing

By Samantha D’Alonzo

The Other Side of Hope directly addresses the Syrian refugee crisis as it tells the intertwined stories of an aspiring restaurateur, Waldemar (Sakari Kuosmanen), and a Syrian refugee, Khaled Ali (Sherwan Haji), as they both attempt to shed the lives they once lived in hopes of starting anew.

Waldemar is a businessman and poker extraordinaire attempting to distance himself from his alcoholic wife. Serious, stone-faced, and clean cut, Waldemar gambles his way to $60,000 during a tense underground game of poker, which he ultimately uses to buy a failing restaurant and a disgruntled waitstaff.

While we see Waldemar’s story directly unfold through Kaurismäki’s lense, we hear most of Khaled’s story as he recants it in a harshly lit immigration office. Khaled, once a mechanic from Aleppo, found his life and family torn apart after his home was destroyed in a bomb strike. After losing almost all of his family members, including his fianceé, mother, and father, Khaled and his sister escape Syria. Their escape is filled with chaos and violence, but fortunately, a few good men help them along. Along the way, Khaled and his sister are separated in a chaotic shuffle. Eventually, Khaled finds himself alone in Finland where his quest for asylum and his lost sister is stymied by the violence and hatred he faces from groups like the Finland Liberation Army.

Khaled’s story is supplemented with the tale of Mazdak (Simon Hussein Al-Bazoon), a refugee from Iraq who has spent a year in Finland. Mazdak takes Khaled under his wing, letting Khaled use his cellphone to try and locate his sister and giving him advice about the asylum process. After a night out, Mazdak tells Khaled that he feels he cannot bring joy to anyone in Finland and that he feels very stagnant in his life. However, he still must continue to put on a brave face because, as he expresses to Khaled, the melancholy refugees are the first to be sent home. Together, Khaled and Mazdak’s stories provide a glimpse into the lives of refugees, from the horrors of their initial escape to the difficulties of acclimating to a new life.

Throughout his journey, Khaled finds a likely friend in Mazdak and a highly unlikely friend in Waldemar. After the two men meet in a dark alley and exchange punches, Waldemar takes Khaled in, giving him a home, a job at the restaurant, and a chance to find his sister. Waldemar’s initially curt and mechanical nature is transformed as he shows kindness and compassion towards Khaled.

TheOther Side of Hope is not exceptional in its swift-moving plot or knockout acting performances, but rather in its thought-provoking realism. Kaurismäki’s dark and grim film makes no attempts to sugar coat the reality that is the Syrian refugee crisis. While Khaled’s and Mazdak’s stories are powerful enough alone, Kaurismäki truly drives home the severity and complexity of the refugee crisis using a handful of effective techniques. Many come in the form of powerful juxtapositions. Immediately after Khaled’s request for asylum in Finland is denied on the grounds that Aleppo is not actually a dangerous place, Khaled is seen hopelessly and emotionlessly watching an extended news report covering the violence and destruction of his hometown, Aleppo. However, Kaurismäki punctuates the harrowing details of Khaled’s story with deadpan humor, such as Waldemar’s decision to transform his struggling business into a sushi restaurant, which provides added realism and depth to the characters. In addition, Kaurismäki’s film demonstrates small glimpses of optimism that promise some sort of hope for both Waldemar and Khaled. The touches of quirky humor and occasional hope alleviate some of the severity of the topic, without taking away from Kaurismäki’s depiction of the refugee crisis. Overall, *The Other Side of Hope* is a worthwhile film that will prove to be both enjoyable and thought-provoking for its viewers.

THEATER REVIEW

To the very brink of the constitution

What it means to be free

By Johnson Huynh

*Hold These Truths*By Jeanne SakataDirected by Benny Sato AmbushThe Lyric Stage

“We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men were created equal.” With these words, the basis of the Constitution was crafted. With these words, one of the most enduring documents in American history was conjured out of thin air. So many of our modern liberties can be traced back to this sheet of paper. And yet, *Hold These Truths* asks the question, “How faithful is our own government to the Constitution?”

The story is based on Gordon Hirabayashi’s (Michael Hisamoto) struggle to fight against Executive Order 9066. Set against WWII, *Hold These Truths* is a powerful tale about liberty and the rights afforded to an American citizen.

The audience sits in silence, enveloped by darkness. From the stage we hear a slow creaking noise and a single spotlight shines down on Gordon Hirabayashi. A few seconds pass, but he is still unmoving. Here, the audience truly gets to see Hisamoto’s power to take control of the stage even when he doesn’t utter a word.

Hold These Truths is a unique production by American standards. Not only is the play performed by one person, but it also showcased the *kurogo*. In traditional Japanese kabuki, the kurogo are essentially stagehands. The only difference is that they dress in all black. The kurogo try to blend into the scenery to lend a certain kind of dynamism to the story. Each scene is powerful, brought together by the combination of Hisamoto’s talent and the kurogo acting in tandem. Hirabayashi would recall certain conversations from his memory to be reenacted by kurogo.

From humble beginnings in his hometown in Washington, Hirabayashi takes us on a tour of his life. We see him go to college to find freedom that a strict Japanese household never would have afforded him. Next, he is catapulted into a leadership program at the YMCA of New York. Like magic, Hisamoto is able to captivate the audience with nothing more than his smile. There is almost a personal connection that he forges with us as we lean forwards in our seats. This isn’t a flashback that the audience gets to watch. It’s as though we are pulled into the world of Hirabayashi. Its effectiveness is amplified by the town hall seating that the Lyric Stage offers. I was tense, waiting for some sort of happy ending for this person who I’ve never met before. It was then that I realized that this is not just a play whose message was shrouded in the mist of history. This is a story that is just as relevant in 1942 as it is now in 2017.

In a time of political confusion, it’s hard to really understand if one’s liberties are truly secured by the Constitution. It’s harder still to believe that our government is trying to protect everyone. What *Hold These Truths* hopes to say is that it’s absolutely necessary to discover these answers for yourself and to fight for the rights that you think you deserve. As Hirabayashi remarked in the play, “It’s a matter of principle.”

★★★☆☆

Hold These Truths

By Jeanne Sakata

Directed by Benny Sato Ambush

The Lyric Stage

ARTS ARTS ARTS

ARTS ARTS ARTS

MIT ARTS HIGHLIGHT

FASHION SHOW REVIEW

One man's trash is another man's treasure

More than 30 designers showcased the unique and the innovative at this past Friday's Trashion Show

By Nathan Liang
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Friday marked the sixth annual Trashion Show, a fashion show put on by UA Sustainability. The Trashion Show is UA Sustainability's call-to-arms for all waste-conscious people everywhere. Designers gather either individually or in groups and use viable could-have-been-trash (and, in some cases, actually-were-trash) materials to create beautiful clothing.

One of the many goals of the Trashion Show was to bring about more awareness of climate change. Everybody leaves a carbon footprint on the earth, and Trashion hoped to make attendees more aware of the other ways they can dispose of their waste or even repurpose it.

Generally, the final products were hit-or-miss. The majority of the designs were dresses and they either made the audience 'ooh' and 'ahh' or furrow their brows in worry at the structural integrity of the piece. Some of my personal favorites include "Unbound" (by Lisbeth Acevedo; design featuring a skirt and bodice made of unbounded pages of old textbooks), "Leather and Lace" (by Coral Bays-Muchmore; design featuring a top and matching hand purse made of an old leather backpack and a skirt made of wasted copy paper and wedding doilies), "Vagabond Chic" (by Samantha Russman; a black dress made of old cloth with explosions of color down the center, reminiscent of a doll from days past), and "More With Paper" (by Xin Wen and Zhuoya Yin; a design featuring tissue paper to make flowering adornments).

Even then, there were many more designs that stood out to both the audience and judges. "Duo et Machina" (by Khanh Nguyen and Ryan Gulland) featured clothing made out of actual sheet metal which was impressive enough to win Most Unexpected materials and second place overall, but also struck a small twinge of fear in me when they got a bit too close to other people. "Fish Out of Water" (by Helen Abadiotakis) was a more humorous display of a mostly naked man in ocean-esque drapery. The model strutted down the runway with a bubble gun to make the experience much more unique. Another standout was "Kinetic Peacock" (by Farita Tasnim), the third place overall winner. The gold-laced peacock feathers and well-crafted bodices were a crowd-favorite, especially considering a mechanism on the right leg caused the peacock feathers to light up. Finally, "Woven" (by June Kim), the first place overall winner, struck many as an ode to the gothic Victorian age. The simple black and white designs wove together to remind attendees of the intricate rope work typically done by sailors and fisherman, but still worked together well to make a comprehensive, lace dress.

UA Sustainability even went above and beyond and invited a guest judge from the Philippines to weigh in on the results. Francis Sollano started out as a trashion designer in his home country. He wanted to spread awareness of the direness of global warming, which more directly impacted his island-cluster country. Nowadays, he is working on trying to influence legislation towards easing the burden of climate change. On the MIT Trashion Show, he said, "I think it's a good start for something that is beyond the school... [and] how this [will] translate when the designers go out of school... and how they can help with climate change [legislation]."

Overall, UA Sustainability did a great job with this year's Trashion Show. The setup in Lobdell really gave a true sense that we were attending a high-end fashion show. Models strutted down the runway with sass and confidence. Designers did a wonderful job of showing off their creative talent by mere use of paper, plastics, and metals.

Music Events From the Weekend

Centrifugues: Fugue One - Dec. 1, 2017

A long time ago, in a classroom far far away (10-250, to be precise), a group of talented students, armed with beautiful voices and bad puns (but in a good way), banded together to form the Centrifuges! In conjunction with the Olin Powerchords, the a capella groups presented a medley of mashups from across the pop culture spectrum, including "For The Longest Time" by Billy Joel/"Lean On Me" by Bill Withers, "I've Got a Feeling" by The Black Eyed Peas/"Geronimo" by Sheppard/"Pumping Blood" by NONONO, "All of Me" by John Legend/"Unfaithful" by Rihanna, "Classic" by MKTO/"I Want You Back" by The Jackson Five, "Secrets" by OneRepublic/"Someone Like You" by Adele, "Style" by Taylor Swift/"Into You" by Ariana Grande, and "I Kissed a Girl" by Katy Perry/"Too Close" by Next, as well as "Born This Way" by Lady Gaga/"When Love Takes Over" by David Guetta sung with some alumni. Accompanying the fantastic singing was an intermediary comical sketch of the (mis-)adventures of some young MIT padawans as they eradicated campus of the dreaded Imperial measurement system. The performances brought out all of the musicians' talents, including solos by Fatima Gunter-Rahman '21, Sarah Flanagan '19, Cecilia Esterman '21, Edward Nguyen '19, and more.

— Torri Yearwood

MIT World Music Day: Rambax MIT - Dec. 2, 2017

A bright smile and a toddler's joyous laugh. Rapid, energetic drum beats. Flailing arms and dancing legs. A call to musical arms and to join the fun. This was the culmination of Rambax MIT's show during World Music Day.

Rambax MIT was founded in 2001 by current director Lamine Touré. More specifically, the group focuses on Sabar, a vibrant drum and dance tradition of the Wolof people of Senegal, West Africa. Anyone affiliated with MIT can take either the beginner or immediate class offered year-round at MIT.

At the performance, Touré introduced the intermediate group first to establish a jovial vibe of celebration. He also highlighted the presence of Malick Ngom, a brotherly friend who came to visit all the way from Senegal. Touré cued in the audience to clap and keep the tempo or to join the forefront of the group and dance without a care. Some audience members were so inspired that they would just jump into the fray and dance all throughout the performance. When it was the beginner group's turn, the music still seemed just as constant and thriving. Touré even took the chance to teach audience members traditional dance moves while the group around carried a steady beat.

Sharing in on that vibe of togetherness was definitely an experience one can only get under very specific circumstances, and I'm grateful to Touré and Rambax MIT for uniting everyone in that room with the power of music.

— Nathan Liang

MIT Chorallaries: Game of Tones - Dec. 3, 2017

Within Kresge, The Chorallaries of MIT hosted their 'Game of Tones' concert. They sang through a strong listing of covers and featured special guests MIT Ridonkulous, MIT Resonance, and a friendly therapy dragon disguised as a Golden Retriever.

Founded during IAP of 1977, The Chorallaries is MIT's oldest coed a cappella group. They also gave rise to the MIT's now-classic, "The Engineers' Drinking Song"; this showing including a Game of Thrones twist on said song. Throughout the show, the Chorallaries covered "Blue Suede Shoes" (originally performed by Elvis Presley; solo by Dan Rigobon '18), "I Have Questions" (originally performed by Camila Cabello; solo by Divya Gopinath '19), a mashup of "Fresh Eyes/Castle On The Hill" (originally performed by Andy Grammar and Ed Sheeran, respectively; solos by Jack Moore '20 and Radhika Bhatt '19), "Supermarket Flowers" (originally performed by Ed Sheeran; solo by Alberto Naveira '21), and "Bring Me to Life" (originally performed by Evanescence; solo by Izzy Lloyd '18).

All performances were emotionally-invoking and pleasing to the ear, and as a result, I can only commend the amazing talent that walks our campus hallways.

— Nathan Liang

And then here's some events we missed, but wish we could have gone to...

Nance Nance Resolution hosted by MIT Resonance

STAR WARS hosted by Cross Products

A Casual Buffet hosted by Roadkill Buffet

MISSION: OHMPOSSIBLE hosted by MIT Ohms

MIT may not be able to legally reduce grad tuition to zero

Tax Bill, from Page 1

York Times and Deseret News.

However, Goldston emphasized that "anything can still happen" and reminded students to "keep the pressure on." According to DiVincenzo, MIT is currently lobbying with various groups that represent higher education institutions, including the Association of American Universities, Association of Public Land Grant Universities, and the American Council of Education. President L. Rafael Reif has also been in contact with presidents of other universities.

Students had various suggestions during the meeting. One student suggested sharing their personal stories with legislators; another suggested contacting large tech companies that hire many MIT graduate students to lobby on their behalf. Both the GSC and the forum emphasized the importance of continuing to call representatives. Goldston suggested that students could also "get family to write and make phone calls…especially in red states."

Along with continuing lobbying against the bill, the administration is preparing for the worst case scenario that graduate student tuition waivers will be taxed. DiVincenzo said that because this bill applies differently to different students, the administration is putting together profiles to measure the effect on individuals.

The administration is also trying to determine if they can recharacterize some of the funding for students' tuitions. This would take advantage of the bill's taxation of only qualified tuition reductions but not qualified scholarships. Asked if MIT could offset the tax by reducing graduate student tuition to nominally zero, Goldston replied, "Among other things, it is not clear this would be legally possible."

EVENT

Cookies with Canines

Relax with four-legged friends from Dog BONES: Therapy Dogs of Massachusetts

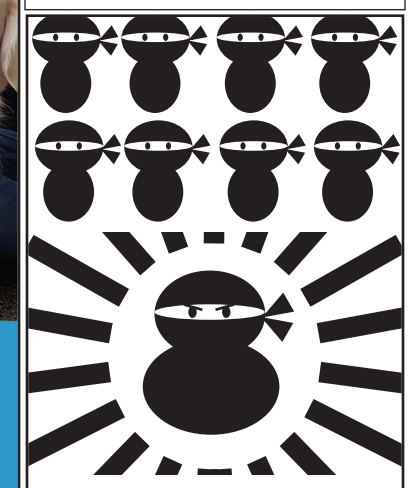
Thursday, December 14, 2-3:30pm
Hayden Library, 14S-100

MITLibraries

Solution to Brain Here

from page 12

5	7	2	1	9	3	8	4	6
6	8	3	2	1	4	9	5	7
4	6	1	9	8	2	7	3	5
1	3	7	6	5	8	4	9	2
8	1	5	4	3	6	2	7	9
2	4	8	7	6	9	5	1	3
7	9	4	3	2	5	1	6	8
9	2	6	5	4	7	3	8	1
3	5	9	8	7	1	6	2	4



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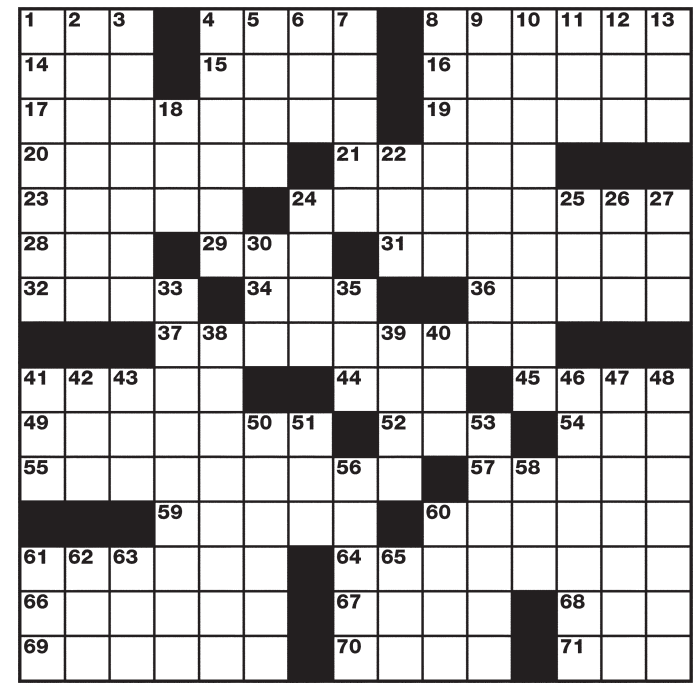
Too to Two by Greg Johnson

Solution, page 10

ACROSS
1 Criticize, so to speak
4 Monomaniacal mariner of fiction
8 Span supporters
14 Go wrong
15 Formal denial
16 Star Trek director J.J.
17 Too __ to __
19 Playful knuckle rub
20 Evolve, as events
21 Opera house exclamation
23 Half of a "game" pair
24 Too __ to __
28 Where some MDs work
29 Smart TV brand
31 Industrious ones
32 Gets it
34 Certain drive-thru convenience
36 Ankara cash
37 Too __ to __
41 One with billing issues, perhaps
44 Witty bit
45 Ride with the air
49 Collected abundantly
52 Important physics equation
54 Part of TNT
55 Too __ to __
57 City near Düsseldorf
59 Fuming
60 Very generous gratuities
61 Whole Foods buyer (2017)
64 Too __ to __
66 Group cry for help
67 Very dark
68 Hyundai rival
69 As quickly as possible
70 Casual wear
71 Corn holder

DOWN
1 Gets back to work
2 Smelter stuff
3 Extravagant
4 Part of a Bullwinkle costume
5 Ready for planting, perhaps
6 Busiest airport in the southern US
7 The Hobbit hero
8 Banquet nibble
9 First and foremost
10 Panorama
11 Video streaming delay
12 Early Beatles record label
13 GPS reading
18 Stats, for short
22 Plunder
24 Place to hike
25 According to
26 Feast-famine connector
27 Letter closers, briefly
30 Half of a "game" pair
33 Zappos stats
35 GPS display
38 Get dinner delivered
39 No longer in effect
40 CSI specimen
41 Pendulum path
42 State school, for short
43 Ring physician's decision
46 On the line
47 Flower in herbal shampoo
48 Old West symbol
50 Boaster's assurance



51 Major leaguer with a "W" cap
53 Drive-thru operator
56 On the level
58 Sonoran sun
60 Sprite sister brand
61 Shakesperean slitherer
62 Scratch up
63 GPS display
65 Unspecified individual

FUNFUNFUNF

FUNFUNFUNF

New UA program to allow undergraduates to apply for conference expense funding

Grants capped at $1,000 per student per academic year

By Jessica Shi
ASSOCIATE NEWS EDITOR

The Undergraduate Association passed a proposal to provide grants for undergraduates attending academic or professional conferences last Tuesday.

These grants may cover expenses related to travel, housing, and conference fees (but not food) and will be capped at $1,000 per student per academic year. The UA has allocated $30,000 towards this program as part of its annual budget, treasurer Jonathan Coden '19 said in an interview with *The Tech* Tuesday.

To implement this new program, the UA also amended its Financial Board (Finboard) bylaws; Coden and Finboard liaisons will meet Saturday to finalize details. The grant application is expected to open to students during the beginning or middle of IAP, with a mid-February deadline for the first round of submissions, Coden said.

The Finboard will use three main criteria when reviewing applications: quality of conference, academic or professional growth, and funding necessity.

"Preference will be given to supporting students applying to attend renowned and well established conferences with clear guidelines and objectives," the policies read. To acquire lists of such conferences in different fields, Coden and the UA are currently in the process of reaching out to executive members and administrative assistants of the academic departments.

The reasoning behind this criteria was that students who attend "new and up-and-coming" conferences might not get as much out of the experience as those who attend conferences with established objectives and sources of funding, Coden said.

However, conferences that are less well-known or otherwise not on these lists but still of a high caliber can be validated through other means. They may be assessed based on "keynote speakers, number of years the conference has been running, agenda, past press surrounding the event, and an evaluation of the quality of the conference from a knowledgeable academic or industry professional," the grant program policies read.

To measure academic or professional growth, the second criteria, the Finboard will look at the students' responses in their application outlining what positive impact they expect attending the conference to have on their life, Coden said.

Coden also noted that the grants will not be exclusive to conferences within the student's major, hence the use of "professional" as well as "academic" growth in the wording. For example, Coden explained, a student in Course 5 who wants to go to biomedical graduate school and thus attend a biology conference should not feel constrained against doing so.

For the third criteria, funding necessity, the policies stipulate that the program will "focus on funding students who would struggle the most to pay to attend the conference out of pocket."

This will be determined based on a "field" in the application, Coden said, which would ask students' desired funding and minimum funding, such as "if it costs $1500 to go to a conference total...and the student says, I want $1500, but if I only get $500, I'm still going to go."

Asked how the Finboard will know whether the student's stated financial need correlates with their actual financial need, Coden said, "It's more so, right now, based on an honor system because even applying and going through this entire process is a barrier to entry to a certain extent."

Once they receive funding, students can coordinate with the Student Activities Office to make travel and housing arrangements and pay for conference fees before their departure (without having to front their own money).

"Students have been asking for this kind of funding for a while now, and I'm really excited that the UA has been able to implement it this year," Sarah Melvin '18, president of the UA, wrote in an email to *The Tech*. "Launching this program has been a priority for [Coden] and the whole officer team."

Previously, students seeking financial assistance to attend conferences "could go to the DSL and talk to them" or "apply directly to the conferences for scholarships," but there was no formal infrastructure within MIT in place, Coden said.

Near the end of the 2016-17 academic year, during meetings to discuss the Student Life Fee, the UA and the Graduate Student Council began a "larger dialogue" that included a comparison of their budgets, Coden said. The UA realized that the GSC had a travel grant program in place and wanted to provide a similar opportunity for undergraduates.

The resulting UA proposal was closely modeled off the GSC's; the $1,000 cap, for example, is also part of the GSC guidelines and should be in the "ballpark" of what a typical conference costs, according to Coden.

As for the anticipated outcome of this year's pilot program, it remains up in the air.

"It is really possible that not enough students apply, and we don't allocate all the money, so that would show we either need to change how this program is done, how it's marketed, or give it less money," Coden said. "Fundamentally, we have no idea how this is going to work out."

Constructive feedback is welcome, Coden added.

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Four-alarm fire damages MIT-owned apartment complex

A four-alarm fire damaged two apartment complexes in Central Square fire on Auburn Street and Magazine Street around 1 a.m. last Thursday.

One of the buildings, 22-24 Magazine Street is a market-rate apartment complex owned by MIT. Approximately 50 individuals live there, including 14 members of the MIT community, Matthew Bauer, director of communications for the Division of Student Life, wrote in an email to *The Tech*.

"As many as 10 students were re-housed on-campus by DSL. Other residents were offered a one-week stay at the Hyatt Hotel, and all residents are being assisted financially to cover emergency expenses," Bauer wrote.

The Cambridge Fire Department responded and all residents were evacuated quickly and the fire contained. No one was seriously injured.

MIT staff are working with affected individuals to secure alternative housing.

Reports estimate that around 65 firefighters from Arlington, Cambridge, Boston, Belmont, Brookline, Newton, Waltham and Watertown responded to the fire.

The cause of the fire has not yet been determined.

— Karleigh Moore

Camb. participatory budget vote closes Fri.

By Karleigh Moore
EDITOR

The City of Cambridge has allocated $800,000 for participatory budgeting, a democratic process in which residents vote on various proposed capital expenditures meant to benefit the public.

The voting process for participatory budgeting this cycle runs Dec. 2 through Dec. 8. All residents of Cambridge over the age of 12, including university students, and regardless of citizenship status, are eligible to participate. All MIT students who reside in Cambridge can participate.

This past summer, over 600 proposed projects were submitted. From August to November, a team of 50 delegates worked in five committees to select the 20 projects that would make it to this cycle's ballot.

This year's ballot includes proposals to add more benches in key locations around Cambridge, make enhancements to public libraries, make resource kits for the homeless, make upgrades to playgrounds, and provide public Wi-Fi in Inman Square and Russell Field. For a full list of proposals, and to vote on your favorites, see http://pb.cambridgema.gov/.

Residents can vote for up to five proposed projects.

This marks the City's fourth cycle of participatory budgeting and saw an increase of $100,000 from the last cycle. Previous winning proposals included adding water drinking fountains throughout the city, upgrading youth centers, improving bike lanes, city art projects, and solar-powered real-time bus tracker displays.

Regular swipes not yet shareable

SwipeShare, from Page 1

the meal swipes. UA Vice President Alexa Martin said in the interview, "It doesn't matter who you are — any student can face food insecurity, so any student who goes to S3 and expresses they're facing this difficulty can get the meal swipes."

Martin also noted that student meal plans include around 10,000 total guest swipes each semester and around 4,000 of those remain unused.

DSL Executive Director for Administration Peter Cummings said in an interview with *The Tech*, "What's really critical here is that we get students to donate ... Out of the ways in which MIT students can help other MIT students, I think this is one of the most elegant ideas."

In the future, the UA and DSL are hoping to expand the SwipeShare program so that students can donate any meal swipes as opposed to just guest swipes. Currently, because meal swipes expire at the end of each week, students cannot donate these regular swipes. However, the DSL is currently working to renegotiate the meal plan programs to include roll-over meals. This change is projected to come into effect next fall and could help facilitate an expansion of the SwipeShare program.

The DSL also has and is working on several other initiatives to support students experiencing issues with financial insecurity. One example is the existing emergency grants program — students in need of money for any variety of reasons, such as food, winter clothing, or an emergency trip home, can contact S3 (for undergraduate students) or Naomi Carton (for graduate students) for support. Other programs include the Food Insecurity Solutions Committee, which makes recommendations to address food insecurity on campus, and the Accessing Resources at MIT Committee, which emerged as a response to the CASE survey and will work to address economic insecurity for students more broadly.

Students who have feedback or questions about existing or potential food insecurity programs can email foodinsecurity-feedback@mit.edu.

Vice President and Dean for Student Life Suzy Nelson concluded in an email to *The Tech*, "The credit for this great idea goes to student leaders, who teamed up with DSL staff and Bon Appetit to establish a creative and caring program. There's more to do to address food insecurity among students, but SwipeShare is a solid first step in the right direction."

Pokerbots Competition cancelled

The popular Pokerbots Competition (6.176) will not be offered this IAP.

This six unit undergraduate class allowed teams of up to four students to build autonomous poker players and concluded with a final competition and prizes of over $25,000 from technology and finance firms. Lectures covered programming, game theory, bankroll management, probability and statistics, and machine learning.

The class was cancelled "due to some scheduling issues," Nilai Sarda '20, one of the instructors for the class, wrote in an email to *The Tech*. "Every year, we have to create a new version of poker and code an engine for it; we decided to take this year off to restructure our internal code to create a better competition in the future."

"We also have plans to scale pokerbots outside of the MIT community, and one of our major projects over the course of the next year will be to set up the infrastructure to make that possible," Sarda continued.

Pokerbots Competition was started in 2011. Sarda wrote, "The spirit of the class was to have people enjoy learning a new variant of poker and examining it from a computational and game theoretic lens. The class will be offered after a one year hiatus next IAP."

— Aishwarya Anantharaman

Solution to Too to Two

from page 11

R	I	P		A	H	A	B		C	A	B	L	E	S
E	R	R		N	O	T	I		A	B	R	A	M	S
S	O	O	N	T	E	L	L		N	O	O	G	I	E
U	N	F	O	L	D		B	R	A	V	A			
M	O	U	S	E		P	O	O	P	E	D	P	O	P
E	R	S		R	C	A		B	E	A	V	E	R	S
S	E	E	S		A	T	M			L	I	R	A	S
			H	O	T	H	A	N	D	L	E			
A	C	T	O	R			P	U	N		W	A	F	T
R	A	K	E	D	I	N		L	A	W		T	R	I
C	L	O	S	E	C	A	L	L		E	S	S	E	N
			I	R	A	T	E		C	N	O	T	E	S
A	M	A	Z	O	N		G	O	O	D	L	A	S	T
S	A	V	E	U	S		I	N	K	Y		K	I	A
P	R	E	S	T	O		T	E	E	S		E	A	R

Solution to When Hell

from page 11

6	9	3	8	5	2	1	7	4
2	1	4	3	7	6	8	9	5
8	7	5	1	4	9	3	2	6
4	6	7	9	8	3	5	1	2
5	8	2	4	1	7	9	6	3
1	3	9	6	2	5	4	8	7
7	2	1	5	3	8	6	4	9
3	4	6	7	9	1	2	5	8
9	5	8	2	6	4	7	3	1

Solution to Freezes Over

from page 11

5	2	9	7	1	3	4	6	8
1	8	7	6	4	5	2	3	9
6	3	4	2	9	8	1	5	7
4	9	8	1	3	2	6	7	5
2	6	1	5	8	7	9	4	3
3	7	5	4	6	9	8	1	2
7	5	6	9	2	1	3	8	4
8	1	2	3	5	4	7	9	6
9	4	3	8	7	6	5	2	1

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